



THE
P L A N

ADOPTED BY THE
G O V E R N O R S
OF THE
MIDDLESEX-HOSPITAL

FOR THE
RELIEF OF PERSONS

AFFLICTED WITH
C A N C E R.

John Howard

No 8

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L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.XCII.

TO THE
MEDICAL GENTLEMEN
OF THE
MIDDLESEX-HOSPITAL.

GENTLEMEN,

THE deplorable situation of paupers afflicted with the disease, called a cancer, was casually a topic of conversation; and, in consequence of that conversation, I was requested to put down, in writing, what I conceived were the best means of affording relief to such persons by a public institution.

The present state of the Middlesex-Hospital, the funds of which are small when compared with some others, its want of immediate patronage, and having, at this time, several wards unoccupied, were the circumstances which occasioned the present application.

To professional men it becomes me to write with diffidence; and any amendment of the plan, I shall presently mention, will be received with pleasure.

I take the liberty to observe, that two principal objects present themselves to my mind on this occasion; namely, the relief of persons suffering under this disease, and the investigation of a complaint, which, although extremely common, is, both with regard to its natural history and cure, but imperfectly known.

For

For the attainment of the first object, it is proposed that an airy ward of the Middlesex-Hospital be appropriated to this specific disease, and to this disease only; that the diseased shall there find such an alleviation of their sufferings as their respective situations may require, and that for an unlimited time.

That one large airy ward, divided into two, one part for men and the other for women, or two distinct wards, containing ten or twelve beds, might be fitted up, if a sufficient fund could be raised; and the ward or wards being already built, there would be wanting only the usual furniture of beds, coal, candles; board, and nursing: and, I believe, the expence of the above articles, including medicines, may amount to about 20*l.* per annum for each of the ten or twelve;

and, as some patients would go off as others came in, within the space of a year, there may, probably, be about forty in-patients relieved in succession.

The worst and most deplorable cases of cancer may be divided into two classes; in the one class, the symptoms proceed to their final termination rapidly; in the other, slowly.

The first of these classes, as it will contain the more distressing and speedily-destructive cases, will comprehend the most proper objects for admission as in-patients; among these will be reckoned scirrhus and cancerous tumours, proceeding with such quickness in their progress, that they readily admit of a removal at an early, but not at a distant, period; and also spreading ulcerated cancers,

cers, both when relievable by art and when not.

The second class will comprehend such women as have cancers not admitting of any operation, the disease going on slowly, in its own natural course, for years. These cancers, although generally adherent, are frequently not ulcerated, nor do they, when so circumstanced, greatly impede the ordinary business of life. Such cases, however, are not only objects of charity, but curious subjects for investigation, and therefore may be relieved as out-patients, with the liberty of being admitted within the hospital whenever their symptoms should become more distressing or require constant daily attendance.

- And, that an opportunity may not be wanting of improving our knowledge of
the

the disease and present methods of cure, I beg leave to suggest farther, that, whenever the fund of the institution shall enable the governors to do so, a power be then given to the medical gentlemen of the hospital to admit occasionally, either as in or out patients, such cases of scrophula, or leprosy, as may lead to the knowledge of cancer or be liable to become cancerous; and that they may be at liberty to recommend, when necessary, warm or cold sea-bathing at the sea, mineral waters, or country air, for such cases as may require more particularly these remedies in aid to other means of relief.

With regard to the second object, namely, the investigation of the disease, Lord Bacon has observed, that medical men should make themselves proficient in physic by studying one disease at a time.

time. It is an opinion worthy of so great a man ; it was particularly adopted by the late Mr. Pott, and by him recommended to all students in surgery.

By confining one or more wards to cancers only, the attention of pupils and others will be directed very strictly to the study of this disease. They will see facts as they arise in the aggregate, from a large number of patients ; new lights will appear, and new discoveries will probably be made.

“ I have often thought,” says Dr. Sydenham, “ that if I knew, accurately, the
 “ natural history of any disease, I should
 “ never be at a loss for a proper method
 “ of treating it :” and the wonderful improvements he made in science, by his great attention to the natural history of diseases and the effects of medicine upon
 them,

them, have been justly admired by practitioners of every country. Vide the *Preface to Dr. Sydenham's Observations on the History and Cure of acute Diseases*.

The natural history of cancers, although a common disease, in the enlarged comprehensive sense in which this great man understood the natural history of diseases, is but little known; I would, therefore, in order to improve a subject, on which a successful practice greatly depends, propose, that a faithful account of the history and circumstances of every case be kept, its antecedents and consequences should be marked, the effects of medicine and of operations, when necessary, noted, together with all the collateral helps to be gained by an inquiry into constitutional habits and diseases not strictly cancerous, but probably connected with it. This examination may be made by a medical gentleman

gentleman of the hospital, with the patient before him ; his notes to be corrected by himself, and kept as a record of the history and circumstances of each case, to be recurred to, as an authority, by any intelligent or scientific person. A copy of these notes may be kept, fairly written, for general inspection ; and, if any thing extraordinary or worthy of more particular notice arise from these sources, let the circumstances be published to the world at large.

By an institution, comprehending the two objects now pointed out, I have a hope not only that the diseased, but that practitioners in general, may be benefited ; that much useful knowledge may be disseminated, and that we may, in no great length of time, be furnished with documents, on the disease and cure, much more authentic than any we are at this time in possession

possession of. It is a very important subject of inquiry, equally interesting to the rich and independent part of mankind as to the poor; and, if such an institution be fairly set on foot, it cannot fail of producing beneficial consequences to all descriptions of persons labouring under this dreadful malady.

Having now, gentlemen, submitted, to your consideration, ideas, which have arisen in the way above-mentioned, I leave their completion with you, to be amended by such farther additions as may arise from the action of minds embarked in the same cause, that of useful science.

I will only add, (and I repeat their names with reverence,) that a better instructor, in all philosophy, is not to be found than Lord Bacon; and that, after the lapse of more than a century, re-
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gard being had to subsequent improvements, there is not a brighter example of sound unsophisticated physick than Dr. Sydenham ; nor, I believe, a better guide to surgery than the late Mr. Pott.

I am, with the greatest respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

Argyll-street,

October 12, 1791.

JOHN HOWARD.

Middlesex.

Middlesex-Hospital, Jan. 7, 1792.

The REPORT of the Committee of Economy, upon a Reference made to them by a Special General Court of Governors of the said Hospital, on the 14th Day of December last, for preparing a Mode for carrying into Execution the Proposal and Plan, communicated by Mr. John Howard, for the Relief of Persons afflicted with Cancer.

Mr. Howard attended, and informed this committee, that the donor proposed to place so much money in the 3 per cent. consols. in the names of William Drake, junior, Esq. Thomas Edwards Freeman, Esq. John Hale, Esq. and Mr. John Howard, of Argyll-street, as trustees, as should furnish an annual income of 120*l.*
and

and also, that he would pay the expence of fitting up and furnishing the ward for the reception of ten or twelve patients, afflicted with cancer.

This committee, after meeting several times to consider of and prepare a mode of carrying the above plan into execution, referred to the committee of economy by the Special Court of December 14, 1791, has come to the following Resolutions, to be reported to the next Special General Court, to be held on the 19th instant.

I. That a ward, capable of holding ten or twelve beds, shall be completely fitted up and furnished.

a having been

II. That, when the ward is completely fitted up and furnished, patients shall be admitted; and that at least six, if so many should offer, shall there be constantly maintained.

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III,

That all Gov. of this Hospital
may recommend

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~~III. That patients afflicted with cancers~~
~~shall be admitted in the same manner as~~
~~other patients of the hospital.~~

as well as

2 IV. That patients, labouring under ca-
sles of cancer requiring operation; spread-
ing ulcerated cancers; and cancers re-
turning after operation; shall remain an
unlimited time, until relieved by art or
released by death, unless it should be ne-
cessary to discharge them for ill beha-
viour.

3 V. Out-patients, afflicted with cancer,
to be relieved with advice and medicine.

VI. That all benefactions of twenty
pounds and upwards, given for this ex-
press purpose, shall be funded; and that
all sums of less amount shall be applied to-
wards immediately extending this institu-
tion;

on ; and a separate account shall be kept of all moneys received and expended for the purpose of this establishment.

VII. That, in conformity to the particular wish of the donor, the name of every patient admitted into the wards, fitted up for the reception of patients afflicted with cancer; shall be entered on a journal; and when, in the judgement of the medical gentlemen of the hospital, any extraordinary circumstance shall occur, or any remedy be discovered, a record shall be made and kept of the same, for the inspection of the public agreeably to the spirit of the original paper, presented by Mr. Howard, which the donor particularly requests may be strictly adhered to.

VIII. Any person making a donation of fifty pounds, or upwards, to the particular establishment for patients afflicted

with cancer, shall be a governor of this hospital for life.

IX. Resolved, it is the opinion of this committee, that the request of the donor, to have the original paper, delivered by Mr. John Howard, entered upon the minutes, be complied with.

Resolved, that the explanatory paper, produced and read to this court by Mr. John Howard, be added to the above plan, (now resolved to be carried into execution,) and entered upon the minutes of this court.

EXPLA-

EXPLANATORY PAPER,

GENTLEMEN,

The fund proposed for this institution, liberal as it undoubtedly is, does not preclude the receipt of other subscriptions. The intention of the donor is only to make a handsome beginning, in the hope of many contributions from the charitably-disposed, to the farther extension of the plan.

It is wished that relief may be given, in every stage of the disease, to a large number of patients afflicted with cancer; and that the accession of medical knowledge, hereby arising, may be generally and widely diffused.

It is presumed such an institution, although supported by a separate subscription, will tend to the aggrandizement of the Middlesex-Hospital. For, in no particular, is the subsisting economy deranged: that economy is strengthened and enlarged by the addition of new resources, backed by immediate patronage, which may probably be the means of raising future subscriptions to a great amount. The business of the house will continue to go on in the usual way. It is no impediment to so benevolent a foundation. It only enlarges the sphere of action, by holding out relief to poor cancerous patients, (many of whom are not now relieved into any hospital, or, if received, are soon discharged without finding benefit,) and, by attempting to investigate, scientifically, the nature and cure of a disease, which, from the character of incurable hitherto annexed,

annexed, has been long, much too long, neglected.

Two descriptions of women, labouring under cancer, have been mentioned in the former paper, in both of which the disease proceeds with rapidity. One comprehends cases, where the tumours are moveable, admitting relief by operation if done early enough. The other takes in spreading ulcerated cancers, not moveable, which cannot be operated upon with safety; and, from the present confined state of our knowledge of the means of cure, may be deemed incurable. The periods, when dissolution takes place in these last cases, vary in different persons; but humanity, as well as the hope of discovering something more than we know at present respecting the treatment of this disease, require, that such patients be not hurried out of the hospital under an idea

that they are incurable ; for, these, of all other cases, call aloud for time and patience.

It is a melancholy, but a true, reflection, that very few persons, with ulcerated cancers, do survive many months after their sores have spread and become highly irritable ; and these unfortunate sufferers, in the judgement of the donor, should be kept in the hospital till relieved by art or released by death.

When a cancer returns after an attempt made to cure it by an operation, that case also claims admission ; for, after a certain period, it will be a spreading ulcerated cancer, and require the same indulgences to the end.

The relief, held out to these deplorable cases, is a striking feature in the present
plan,

plan, and not to be found within the rules of any hospital ; but, had the intention of the donor been confined simply to such, the charity would have been too partial. It would, it is true, have been a charity for incurables, but it would have been considered as an alms-house. The *eadem vocabula rerum* might, in time, have prevailed, common dressings and common means would, probably, have been used ; while the cause of science, with the best intentions of the medical gentlemen of the house, had been forwarded very little indeed.

To make the plan complete, the addition of patients of a third description was wanting, and the defect is supplied by admitting cases that require operation. By the specification of the three kinds of cases, as they stand in the fourth resolution of the committee, the plan is perfected. The
principal

principal subjects on which future improvements must turn (taking in the collateral aid of the papers) are sufficiently defined, and can never be mistaken. Thus, the character of the institution is specified with precision, as a charity for cancers in general ; and, in proportion to the number of cases requiring operation this institution will embrace, so will the general expences of the hospital be lessened by this separate provision for cancerous cases already admissible within its walls.

Persons afflicted with cancers, which go on slowly for years, and are adherent without ulceration, are, in this plan, considered as out-patients. These, however, become objects of admission, when their cancers ulcerate, when such become highly irritable, and when the sufferers can no longer follow their accustomed occupations.

There

There are also some other cases of cancerous tumours, which will not require admission but for the purpose of being removed.

From the foregoing outline it is clear, that the plan embraces not only the most distressing objects, but every symptom and circumstance of the disease : abstracted, therefore, from the relief and comfort it will afford to many a suffering individual, there will be a fair scope for investigation and improvement, which no institution upon a smaller scale could possibly give.

Had the affair of investigation been omitted, the plan would not only have been extremely imperfect, but it would neither have filled the mind nor have answered the intentions of the donor ; I can only say, he has the whole matter much at heart.

heart. He does not mean to prescribe to the medical gentlemen of the house, but hopes that this part of the plan will be kept up with due attention and spirit. As a very interesting passage in the works of Lord Bacon will, I believe, explain farther his ideas on this subject, I beg leave to subjoin it.

When speaking of certain desiderata in medicine, he says, “ *Primum est, inter-*
 “ *missio diligentiae illius Hippocratis, utilis*
 “ *admodum, et accuratae, cui moris erat,*
 “ *narrativam componere casuum circa ægro-*
 “ *tos specialium, referendo qualis fuisset*
 “ *morbi natura, qualis medicatio, qualis*
 “ *eventus. Atque hujus rei naētis nobis*
 “ *jam exemplum tam proprium atque insigne,*
 “ *in eo scilicet viro, qui tanquam parens ar-*
 “ *tis habitus est, minime opus erit exem-*
 “ *plum aliquod forinsecum ab alienis artibus*
 “ *petere; veluti a prudentiâ juris-consul-*
 “ *torum,*

“ torum, quibus nihil antiquius, quam il-
 “ lustriores casus, et novas decisiones, scrip-
 “ tis mandare; quo melius se, ad futuros
 “ casus, muniant et instruant. Istam pro-
 “ inde continuationem medicinalium narra-
 “ tionum desiderari video; presertim in
 “ unum corpus cum diligentia et judicio di-
 “ gestam: quam tamen non intelligo ita fieri
 “ debere amplam, ut plane vulgata, et quæ
 “ quotidie obveniant, excipiat (id enim in-
 “ finitum quiddam esset neque ad rem) nec
 “ rursus tam angustam ut solummodo mira-
 “ bilia et stupenda (id quod a nonnullis fac-
 “ tum est) complectatur. Multa enim in
 “ modo rei et circumstantiis ejus, nova sunt,
 “ quæ in genere ipso nova non sunt; qui au-
 “ tem ad observandum adjicit animum, ei,
 “ etiam in rebus, quæ vulgares videntur
 “ multa observatu digna occurrent.” Mal-
 let's Edition of Lord Bacon's Works.
 Vol. IV. cap. II. page 111. De Aug-
 mentis Scientiarum.





